



March 9, 2002

Good afternoon, Chairman Winfield, Chairman Stafstrom and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Brian Anderson. I am a legislative director for Council 4 AFSCME's Public Safety Chapter, which represents about 2,000 municipal police officers.

Our union opposes Senate Bill 304, AN ACT IMPLEMENTING RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE POLICE TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY TASK FORCE, in its current form. The most troubling part for our members is section 5. This bill allows uncorroborated complaints against individual police officers to be compiled and made public. While not identifying an officer's name, each officer would be assigned a unique identifying number. The bill language states that complaints could be made anonymously and without being notarized. The identity of the complainant will be shielded. Due process demands that a person not have uncorroborated complaints counted against them. Uncorroborated complaints are not recognized in most discipline or court proceedings. They have no standing, as they are uncorroborated.

Police work lends itself to uncorroborated complaints. A 2006 U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics report on complaints against police officers found that while more than **30 percent of complaints could not be corroborated, 25% of the complaints were found to be unjustified – meaning that evidence showed that the complained about activity reported could not have happened. Officers were exonerated from 23% of the complaints.**

Our members often have to investigate members of criminal conspiracies – such as street gangs or organized crime families. Such organizations can be quite creative in their efforts to thwart or harass our members. A system that treats uncorroborated complaints against officers with the same validity as corroborated complaints lends itself to abuse. It may also serve to undermine public faith in the

police at a time when polling shows that faith is already low. We urge you to reject using uncorroborated complaints in data collection and reporting.

<https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/ccpuf.pdf>

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Our officers are sympathetic to **HB 5349, AN ACT CONCERNING THE TIMELY REPORTING BY THE POLICE OF A DEATH**. Officers understand the heartbreak and anguish that families go through when a family member dies, especially under suspicious circumstances. Our members do want all deaths properly investigated. We want families to get justice for their family members. We do not oppose this bill. **We do urge that this bill be amended so that the responsibility for informing a decedent's next of kin be given to the police chief or administration rather than to the discovering officer.** A first on the scene officer often has his or her hands full in handling the death scene. It seems more proper to place such a notification responsibility with management rather than rank and file officers.

Our union does support House Bill 5372. AN ACT PERMITTING CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKERS TO CONDUCT PERIODIC BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ASSESSMENTS OF POLICE OFFICERS AND PROMOTING THE INCREASED USE OF CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKERS BY LAW ENFORCEMENT UNITS WHEN ISSUING EMERGENCY CERTIFICATES.

Some of the most knowledgeable experts on treating police officers for trauma are social workers. It just makes sense to have the best professionals in the field utilized to deal with police officer mental health assessments.